

# A LITURGY FOR HOME - PENTECOST XIV

*When life's circumstances prevent us from attending Church.*

## THE GATHERING

*A candle may be lit as a reminder that God is present in our midst.*

## THE OPENING ACCLAMATION & COLLECT

*Leader* Holy God, you are always with us.

*People* **Open our eyes to your presence.**

*Leader* God's power working in us.

*People* **Can do more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to God!**

*Leader* Let us pray

Confirm, O God, in unity and truth the Church you gather in Christ. Encourage the fervent, enlighten the doubtful, and bring back the wayward. Bind us together in mutual love, that our prayer in Christ's name may be pleasing to you. We ask this through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

*People* **Amen.**

## A WORD OF SCRIPTURE

*Matthew 18:15-20*

*Reader* A reading from the gospel of Matthew

Jesus said, "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

*Reader* The Word of the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

## REFLECTION

- There is so much that is challenging in our world just now – from finding ways of dealing with the Coronavirus to ways of staying safe and healthy, from

hurricanes to displays of hate, from injustice to intolerance – that the world desperately needs us to be the Body of Christ. Moreover, there is so much going on in our lives – from heartaches we barely sense to hopes we can scarce imagine – that they also need to be cared for by, and to be part of, the Body of Christ. And so I'll say it again: authentic community is hard. But also powerful. And healing. And a tremendous witness. And a heck of a lot of work, to be sure, but always worth it. *The Rev. David Lose*

- Jesus provides advice to his disciples on how to move step-by-step toward reconciling grievances within the Christian community. This is not a recipe that can be applied to all situations, but it gives some specific advice on how to resolve differences when one is hurt by another member of the community. *Barbara E. Reid, OP*
- This passage from Matthew is sometimes hard to put into the context of community, where it belongs. The concern in the story is about the overall health of the community, which in Matthew is small and young and fragile and new, and the sins that are to be corrected are worrisome because of the effect those sins have on the community itself. It's not so much about "you sinned against me," but about the health of the whole. *The Rev. Penny Nash*
- Although the church needs to make discriminating judgements about behavior that is unworthy of Christians, all judgements are to be tempered with an awareness of Christ's love for the lost and are to be guided by the savior who is among us. The process of judgement is to proceed in ways that respect the reputation and humanity of every member, even those who may have acted wrongly. *Thomas H. Troeger*

## QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- ✓ Pray for the grace to start a process of reconciliation with someone who has offended you.
- ✓ Is there a difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?
- ✓ How has your judging been? How does it feel to be forgiven?
- ✓ Ask Jesus to give you a listening ear to be able to repent of ways you have offended others.

## RESPONSE

*Adapted from the Sisters of Mercy*

*Leader* We offer our prayers to you O God of Life, you created all people as one family and call us to live together in harmony and peace; surround us with your love as we face the challenges and tragedies of this present time.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Intercessor* In this time of bewilderment and fear, we ask you to give us the courage to take care of one another as Jesus did. For those who are ill, especially those who are frightened and alone, for those who cannot access healthcare, for those who are homeless and lost; Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

In the midst of our sadness and grief, we ask you to give us words to comfort one another. For those who are dying, and for those who have already died from this virus, for those who care for them and for those with no one to care for them. Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

In the midst of our own anxiety, we ask for the courage to support one another as you would. For those who are poor, hungry, and homeless; for those who have lost their employment; those who fear the present and the future; for our government and financial institutions and those who lead them; Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

In the midst of our brokenness, we pray that the peace of the risen Christ may heal the wounds of all victims of injustice, exploitation, prejudice, hatred and racism. We pray for our nation to stand up and do the work of uniting us, not dividing us. Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

In the midst of our struggle to ensure a healthy future for all people, we ask you to give us the hope that surpasses our current understanding. For healthcare workers, spiritual leaders and our faith communities, for artists and poets, for prophets and teachers; Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

*Silence may be kept*

*Leader* Gathering our prayers and praises together, we are bold to say:

*People* Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

## CONCLUDING COLLECTS

*Leader* Grant us, O Lord, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

*People* **Amen.**

### *A Collect for the Elimination of Racism*

*Leader* Good and gracious God, you invite us to recognize and reverence your divine image and likeness in our neighbor. Enable us to see the reality of racism and free us to challenge and uproot it from our society, our world and ourselves. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

*People* **Amen.**

### *The Rev. Dr Sam Wells*

*Leader* God of healing and hope, in Jesus you meet us in our places of pain and fear. Look with mercy on those who have contracted the coronavirus, on any who are vulnerable, and on all who feel in danger. Through this time of global concern, by your Holy Spirit bring out the best not the worst in us. Make us more aware of our interdependence on each other, and of the strength that comes from being one body in you. Through Christ our wounded healer.

*People* **Amen.**

*Leader* Let us bless the Lord.

*People* **Thanks be to God.**

*Leader* Go out into the world in peace; have courage; hold onto what is good; return no one evil for evil; strengthen the faint hearted; support the weak, and help the suffering; honor all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

*People* **Amen.**